

Summary

The topic of this PhD thesis, which is entitled *Polish and English medical case reports in confrontative framing, exemplified by otorhinolaryngological texts* is a presentation of the subject of the micro-genre of medical case reports, their characteristics and role in external specialized medical and otorhinolaryngological communication.

Hearing disorders are very common nowadays. According to the *World Health Organization*, 466 million people suffer from hearing disorders, 34 million of which are children. It is estimated that by 2020 this quantity will rise to 900 million¹. The importance of hearing and otorhinolaryngology as a discipline focusing on the treatment of hearing disorders is emphasised by Helen Keller's words: "When you lose your hearing, you lose contact with people"².

One of the important factors in medicine and medical practice is effective specialised medical and otorhinolaryngological communication. It can take place on many levels, and the following varieties are considered most popular: specialist (physician) – specialist (physician), specialist (physician) – other personnel (medical, including students/residents) and specialist (physician) – non-specialist (patient). In this PhD thesis, the author focuses on external communication among specialists (physician – physician), both national and international, as well as doctors' personal development in general.

Continuous scientific and technological progress, which includes also progress in medicine, creates the necessity of acquiring and updating specialized knowledge. Communication among specialists might take place during scientific meetings – conferences, workshops, congresses, symposia etc., as well as in publications in specialised medical journals. Nowadays the medical case report is a micro-genre that is gaining more and more importance among numerous varieties of scientific writing. Although medical case reports are not as valued as original research articles, they fulfil a significant role, for instance in transferring specialised knowledge about rare, no-typical unknown diseases, their symptoms, new methods of treatment, unexpected effects of treatment, etc. The importance of case reports is also proven by their long history – they appeared in medical literature as early as in Ancient Egypt and developed over the centuries.

With regard to specialised communication (such as medical, i.e. otorhinolaryngological), specialised texts concerning the said areas of study play a significant role as a tool for transferring specialised knowledge. Moreover, it is worth noting that a specialised medical language (register) is necessary to create specialised texts (in order to create meanings and express specialised knowledge) as much as to understand them (that is to reconstruct meaning and specialised knowledge). Nowadays, external communication takes place not only in national languages, but increasingly more often also in foreign languages, especially in English. More and more specialists who are non-native English speakers use medical English in their works. Furthermore, editorial boards of numerous specialised medical journals decide to publish papers or whole journals in English. Additionally, English is also the official language of scientific meetings, even in Poland and other non-English speaking countries. Despite the rise of the importance of the English language in science and medicine, many papers are still published only in Polish. As a consequence, major achievements of and developments in Polish medicine are not adequately promoted among scientists at the international level.

In this PhD thesis, the author attempted a comparative multifaceted linguistic analysis of one of the means in medical external communication, that is medical case reports in the field of otorhinolaryngology in Polish and English. Firstly, the author assumed that case reports constitute a model of texts in terms of structure, rhetoric, as well as linguistic and metadiscursive features. Based on that statement, two analytical aims were identified. First of them was an attempt to describe a model of texts, i.e. structural, rhetorical, linguistic and metadiscursive characteristics of medical case reports appearing in Polish and English otorhinolaryngological journals. The second aim was a comparative analysis of these characteristics. One of the research questions posed was whether, and if so, which tendencies (including similarities and differences) occur or dominate in the analysed texts and what factors influence the final linguistic-structural pattern of the case reports – is it a journal, the country of printing/ the country of authors, language or other aspects.

¹ <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs300/en/> (dostęp 02.03.2018).

² H. Skarżyński i wsp. (red.), 2017, *Prawie wszystko o słuchu*. Warszawa, Instytut Fizjologii i Patologii Słuchu, s. 163.

The reason for initiating this research was the observation that in Polish literature on the topic no studies had been performed on Polish case reports from the linguistic point of view; neither had the language of otorhinolaryngology been analysed as one of the representatives of specialised languages. Numerous English papers about case reports from different perspectives were reviewed, such as articles on their etymology, structure, linguistic features, history, role and functions, importance, etc. These studies on the English language material might be replicated on the Polish material and treated as a starting point for future analyses. Consequently, the author concluded that it is necessary to undertake a more thorough analysis of Polish and English otorhinolaryngological case reports from specialised scientific journals. The main goal of this PhD thesis was to improve external specialised communication between otorhinolaryngologists in Polish and English environments in the context of transferring specialised knowledge while using established text models.

The main aim was divided into partial goals. The author of this PhD thesis assumed that otorhinolaryngological texts are representatives of specialised texts and that medical register as a representative of specialised languages is a tool for creating and understanding specialised texts. The first step was a comparative analysis of Polish and English otorhinolaryngological discourses from the perspective of medical language. It was proved that these languages have typical lexical, grammatical, syntactic, stylistic and pragmatic norms. The second step was an attempt to characterize Polish and English otorhinolaryngological texts, which constitute a reflection of language skills of otorhinolaryngologists. One of the last partial goals was the description of the model of Polish and English case reports.

The linguistic knowledge and results obtained might be implemented in order to improve specialised international communication. Consequently, this may help promote the achievements of Polish medicine worldwide. These research outcomes may also contribute to further or similar comparative analyses of other foreign languages or genres. The PhD thesis and all its results may additionally be used in otorhinolaryngological didactics, as well as in teaching foreign languages for specific purposes. This doctoral dissertation can also provide a niche for innovative research in the area of translation studies from the perspective of writing case reports and their promotion in the international environment.

This PhD thesis constitutes an overview of the research on and an empirical study of medical case reports. It consists of nine chapters, six of which are the main ones. In the first five theoretical chapters, the literature on the topic was thoroughly reviewed with a view to presenting the current state of knowledge and to identifying possible niches in research. The second aim of the literature review was an attempt to create a compendium of specialised, medical and otorhinolaryngological communication, especially written one, on the example of case reports. The author initially assumed that the compendium may be intended for humanists, including linguists, translators and interpreters, educators, and also for healthcare professionals such as students, residents and specialists – physicians.

The first chapter consists of the Introduction to the PhD thesis, its main aims, structure and a short description of research material and methods.

The second chapter concentrates on the research subject and the history of otorhinolaryngology against the background of the history of general medicine, from ancient times until the latest advances. In particular, the history and development of national and international otology, followed by laryngology and otorhinolaryngology, were presented.

The next three chapters deal with linguistic topics. The third chapter describes definitions of scientific discourse, assumptions in and methods of its analysis and specialised communication, including medical and otorhinolaryngological communication. This part includes a description of external communication among specialists (physician – physician), mainly international, with English as the language of communication, with close attention paid to the problem of professional development. Deliberations on specialised communication, as well as on specialised languages (chapter 4) and specialised texts (chapter 5) (medical, otorhinolaryngological) were based on the anthropocentric theory of human languages by F. Grucza³ (e.g. 1992) and the anthropocentric approach to the linguistics of specialised texts by S. Grucza⁴ (e.g. 2006).

³ F. Grucza (1992), *O językach specjalistycznych (= technolektach) jako pewnych składnikach rzeczywistości języków ludzkich*, (in:) F. Grucza/ Z. Kozłowska (red.), *Języki specjalistyczne: materiały z XVII Ogólnopolskiego Sympozjum ILS UW, PTLIS/ILS UW*. Warszawa, s. 5–28.

⁴ S. Grucza (2006), *Od lingwistyki tekstu do lingwistyki tekstu specjalistycznego*. Warszawa, KJS.

The fourth chapter offers a presentation of the characteristics of specialised languages in comparison with general language, as well as of specialised idiolects and polilects, language skills and a comparison of Polish and English medical and otorhinolaryngological languages.

The fifth chapter deals with the characteristics of specialised texts as tools of transferring specialised knowledge. Then Polish and English medical and otorhinolaryngological texts were described, especially the micro-genre of case reports as representatives of research articles and case reporting in general.

The sixth chapter is an analytical one and includes descriptions of methodology, research material and methods. The research material consists of medical case reports from Polish and English otorhinolaryngological journals (four national and eight international). After the detailed selection of the whole research material and the conclusion that the analysis of a larger number of texts would not contribute anything new to the dissertation, the research material was narrowed down to 109 case reports (54 in Polish and 55 in English). One of the factors in selecting scientific journals were the indicators in a list of scored journals published by *The Ministry of Science and Higher Education* and *The Thomson Reuters Impact Factor List*. The *AntConc* concordancer software program was used to perform the analysis of medical case reports at hand.

The main analyses began with a review of the literature on and general characteristic of case reporting as a genre and case reports as a micro-genre. Some issues applicable to the entire micro-genre regardless of the field were described, i.e. functions and role, weaknesses and the origin of the genre.

The next step of the research were quantitative and qualitative analyses of the structure as well as of rhetorical, lexical or metadiscoursal features. For this purpose, ten text corpora were created (five in each language), containing sections of case reports: abstract, *Introduction*, *Case report*, *Discussion* and *Conclusions*. Firstly, the structure of case reports was described and patterns identified in titles, abstracts, *Introduction*, *Case report*, *Discussion*, *Conclusion* and other additional parts, such as *Acknowledgements*. The second step was a rhetorical analysis, based on the models of rhetorical analysis (moves) by J. Swales (e.g. 1990)⁵ and K. Nwogu (e.g. 1989)⁶. In the PhD thesis, the author adapted the abovementioned models to case reporting and presented a model of rhetorical analysis of case reports. The guidelines for authors from the described journals were also compared. The third step was divided into two parts. Firstly, general linguistic features of all the sections were presented. Secondly, the author focused on the metadiscourse of case reports, based on A. Ädel (2006)'s⁷ and K. Hyland (np. 2005)'s⁸ research. Finally, atypical case reports were described. This chapter ends with a comparative summary of the results and conclusions.

The following chapters discuss possible ways to implement the results to the field of otorhinolaryngological didactics and translation (chapter 7), final summary (chapter 8) and bibliography (chapter 9), followed by a summary in English. In addition, the work includes attachments – a list of source materials, a list of figures and tables, examples of case reports in Polish and English, and a table with a comparative summary of the results and conclusions.

⁵ J. Swales (1990), *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge, Cambridge Press University.

⁶ K. Nwogu (1989), *Discourse variation in medical texts: schema, theme and cohesion on professional and journalistic accounts*. Birmingham, Aston University

⁷ A. Ädel (2006), *Metadiscourse in L1 and L2 English*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins Publishing.

⁸ K. Hyland (2005), *Metadiscourse. Exploring Interactions in Writing*. London, Continuum.